

# imagine

a democratic alternative to the monarchy



## Members Decide

The Annual Conference Makes Policy

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Meet the new Board of Directors inside

**Republic**

The Campaign for an  
Elected Head of State



# Annual Conference

The Annual Conference and General Meeting is a time when members can really involve themselves in the running of Republic.

This year saw around 100 members debate and decide upon a new policy document. The document sets out Republic's view on what type of elected head of state our campaign advocates, as well as giving some reasons why.

The policy debate was engaging and lively, with various amendments being proposed and adopted.

Questions about military ranks being held by presidents as well as points about the strategic purpose of the document were discussed.

The final draft was adopted by a unanimous vote.

The debate was followed by reports from the Executive Chair, Treasurer and Campaign Manager. Executive Chair John Campbell delivered an upbeat report outlining some of the developments of the year, the growing professionalism of the organisation and the transition to a limited company.

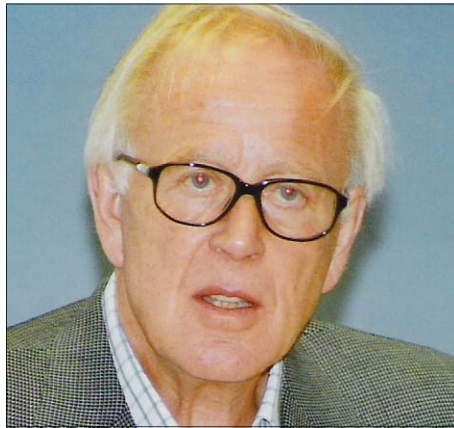
The financial report, completed by John Campbell who had been standing in for John Atkins, raised some questions. The meeting was assured that the reporting of financial matters was to be formalised for the coming financial year to comply with the requirements of Companies House.

Campaign Manager Graham Smith spoke about the importance of membership, which has grown by 50% in the past twelve months, and the need to re-focus on fundraising.

The reports were followed by a question and answer session. Members were keen to discuss tactics and ideas about how to develop the campaign.

The Conference was concluded with speeches from Peter Wilby, former editor of the Independent on Sunday and the New Statesman, and Anthony Scrivener QC, lawyer and long-time supporter of Republic.

The speeches triggered a debate about Republic's chances of success and how that success might be achieved. ■



■ Anthony Scrivener QC gave a lively speech about promoting our republican message.

## 100 Club

### The Winners!

The winning number for October was 1013, J Fenney, winning a cash prize of £49.60.

November's winner was 1014, F Chapman, winning £51.20.

The numbers were drawn at a meeting of the Board.

*Remember -  
you need to be in it to win it.*

**GOOD LUCK FOR  
NEXT MONTH**

**[www.republic.org.uk/100](http://www.republic.org.uk/100)**

## New Promotional Postcards Launched

In response to an idea proposed at the Annual Conference, Republic has launched promotional membership postcards.

The postcards feature a clear 'Make Monarchy History' message on the front, and carry a membership form on the back.

During the question and answer session at the Conference a member suggested it would be a great idea if members could carry small promotional flyers or postcards that could act as instant membership forms. This way if someone met a republican supporter they could easily sign them up.

The idea received widespread support and so Republic's campaign team immediately

looked at how to take the idea forward. The results are below. ■

### GET YOUR FREE CARDS TODAY!

To order a FREE pack of ten *Republic Postcards*, simply write to the usual address or email [enquiries@republic.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@republic.org.uk)

The cards are small enough to fit comfortably inside a jacket pocket or handbag... so be sure to carry them with you and sign people up.



# WINTER PARTY

Following the success of the *Republic Day Bash '06* Republic is very excited to announce the launch of the WINTER PARTY

**Tickets for the London event are £8 in advance, £10 on the door.**

There will be FREE food, a cash bar, the chance to win quality prizes in a FREE raffle plus guest speakers - a great night out for everyone.

**Saturday February 10th 2007**  
**Doors open: 7pm**

**At the Black Horse, 6 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HH, not far from Tottenham Court Road tube.**

**Details of guest speakers to be advised!**

Buy your tickets online at [www.republic.org.uk](http://www.republic.org.uk) or call 08708 508 825. Or just send a cheque to the usual address, making sure to write 'winter party' on the back. ■

The Black Horse is a great venue to celebrate the Republic campaign: in the late nineteenth century the pub was the meeting place of the Chartist movement. Help us make history in the twenty first century, support Republic by coming to the very first Republic Winter Party.



## Membership Matters

You will have noticed that this edition of *Imagine* is accompanied by a questionnaire.

This is part of our continuing strategy to improve membership services and the way in which Republic is perceived by our valued members.

It is important that we know what our members are thinking, so we hope you will take a few moments of your time to answer the questions and let us know your thoughts about Republic and the campaign.

Once completed simply return the form to our FREEPOST address, which you will find at the foot of the questionnaire. ■

### Republic

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## Letters

First, may I congratulate you on the work you are doing to promote republicanism. A long way to go, but I'm sure we'll get there.

I enjoyed Michael Coyne's article "I am a republican".

I used to describe myself as a "republican, in the Thomas Paine sense, not the IRA sense". Now I just say "I'm a republican".

Keep up the good work.

Marie Anderson  
Wiltshire

Kelly Shaw wrote a piece in *Imagine* suggesting possible official names for the British Republic.

After much thought, I am convinced that "Federal Republic of Great Britain", which would be colloquially

reduced to "Great Britain" or "Britain", would do very nicely.

In some official documents, the designation "British Republic" could also feature.

My suggestion is that the British Republic be broken down into federal states : 1 in Ulster; 2 in Scotland; 2 in Wales; and 9 in England, including Greater London.

Thus British law, English/Welsh law, and Scottish law, would be superseded by Federal and State law.

In relation to national symbols, the Union Jack would continue to serve its purpose, although we do need a new anthem : "Land of Hope and Glory" perhaps?

As for the coat of arms, it is quite a striking work. Rather than remove it, perhaps we could make some subtle changes to it. My suggestion is removing the crowns from the animals depicted. I would also suggest substituting the unicorn with a horse. Thus, the horse would represent Industry and the lion Valour

- great British values!

Finally, the expression "Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense", coined by King Edward Longshanks, could be substituted by "Hail the British Republic"; equally, "Dieu et Mon Droit" could easily be altered to a simple "British Republic."

Are these suggestions too radical or too romantic? I shall let other members decide.

Paul Anderson  
East Kent

We'd like to hear from you. Send your letters to [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk) or to *Imagine*, PO Box 69, Brighton, BN50 9GS.

*If you would like to contribute an article to Imagine email [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk) or call Graham Smith on 08708 508 825 and ask for a copy of the Writer's Guidelines.*



# AGM DVD - out now!

Did you miss the recent Annual Conference? Don't worry, catch the highlights on DVD!

At just £9.95 it's a lot cheaper than getting the train to London, so why not sit back, relax and watch the highlights of the Conference in the comfort of your own home.

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TODAY**

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or order online at [www.encodemedia.co.uk/republic](http://www.encodemedia.co.uk/republic)



## Australia takes one more step toward a republican future

The Australian Republican Movement (ARM) has welcomed the public news that all new ambassadors to Australia have to present their credentials upon arrival in Canberra, not to the Queen, but to the Governor-General.

This represents another small but non-constitutional step towards ARM's larger goal of an Australian Head of State in an Australian Republic.

Ted O'Brien, National Chair of the ARM said "The government has the ARM's absolute support in taking this step en route towards the ultimate prize of having an Australian replacing Queen Elizabeth II as Australia's Head of State".

"At the very core", said Mr O'Brien, "the republic is about vesting sovereignty of our nation in the Australian people, rather than a foreign monarch. This step is part of an evolutionary process and I welcome the recognition by the Howard government of the republican mood of the Australian people. The process towards a republic might seem unduly slow at times but this decision is another indication that the ultimate direction is clear".

Republic, which is allied to the ARM as a member of *Common Cause*, welcomed the news. Graham Smith responded, saying, "Republic is keen to see more progress in Australia as we know an Australian republic will be a great inspiration to all those who want the same for the people of Britain." ■

# A Highland Gathering



## SNP CONFERENCE SUCCESS

Scottish Nationalists were flocking to the Republic stand at their party's conference in Perth recently. Within hours of the conference starting Republic's petition was filling up.

Graham Smith, who was running the stand, told reporters, "There's a great deal of optimism among the delegates about the prospect of an independent Scotland."

He added, "We are keen to ensure that if Scotland does choose an independent future, they also choose to ditch the monarchy in favour of an

elected head of state."

"This is a debate that has to take place in Scotland and we're pleased to see the SNP are enthusiastic supporters of a republic."

Republic's presence was noted by journalists, with the Scotsman telling its readers that the 'must-have' item of the conference was the republican yoyo!

The conference proved very useful in making contacts north of the border and Republic is keen to develop its Scottish campaigning in the new year. ■

## Canadian allies call for repeal of 'treachery' law

Canada's republican movement recently called for the repeal of a law which allows imprisonment for "disloyal" comments about the monarch.

*Citizens for a Canadian Republic* is calling on their federal government to bring the National Defence Act into the twenty-first century by removing the penalty for members of the Armed Forces speaking openly about the monarchy. Presently, the Act's section on dealing with spying,

mutiny and desertion also covers "Disgraceful Conduct - Traitorous or disloyal utterances," which states the following: "Every person who uses traitorous or disloyal words regarding Her Majesty is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years or to less punishment."

"It's shocking that in 2006, this wording remains in the National Defence Act," said Tom Freda,

National Director of Citizens for a Canadian Republic. "Legislation including imprisonment for criticising the head of state puts us in the company of despotic regimes such as Belarus, Iran, North Korea and Syria."

Britain has a similar law on the statute books, the Treason Felony Act 1848. However, the Act was effectively rendered obsolete by the Human Rights Act, according to a 2003 ruling by the Law Lords. ■

# I am a republican



## ■ MICHAEL COYNE

Republic was formed in 1983, at a time when criticism of the monarchy was all but taboo. During the 1980s, recession

ensured the scarcity of bread, and the royals were wheeled out to provide the circuses. A classic case in point: the announcement of the Charles-Diana engagement in February 1981 obliterated news coverage of the unemployment statistics released the same day (the concept of 'a good day to bury bad news' wasn't invented by a New Labourite on 9/11). Ironically, it was the run-up to the heir's second marriage that catapulted the organisation into the spotlight. Republic's ads appeared in national newspapers (with the exception of the Daily Mail and Telegraph, which refused to run them), urging people to join and to help, as the ads themselves put it, 'End The Royal Farce'.

Republic has no political agenda beyond abolition of the monarchy and its replacement by a head of state based on 'democracy, accountability, transparency and merit'. Republic has no preferred candidate for head of state. Its sole preference, its sole issue, is that we, the people should have the right to decide who that person will be. Republic's website lists a series of hypotheses either unlikely or impossible under the present system, ranging from the jokey ('Imagine ... A head of state who qualified in a subject before

lecturing the rest of us about it.') to the constitutionally serious ('Imagine ... A head of state who isn't at the pinnacle of a system of privilege ... Our head of state being accountable to the people.').

One of the ads lists reasons why the monarchy should be consigned to history, among them: 'It is discriminatory ... It demands deference ... It is the enemy of merit and aspiration ... It devalues intellect and achievement.'

I want to address just one of these indictments, and I want to do so in a peculiarly Scottish context. One of the most obnoxious headlines I ever saw was in the Sunday Post on 17th October 2004: 'The Royals are no eggheads.' It was a typically deferential assessment of how the Windsors' long history of lacklustre academic achievement hadn't stopped them from making their mark in life. Such enterprising self-starters!

The impetus for that sorely-needed defence of hyper-entrenched privilege was the controversy over who had contributed what to Prince Harry's A-level Art project. It did not debar his entry to Sandhurst; and with all the talk of regiments being phased out, it was comforting to know a 'B' in A-level Art and a 'D' in A-level Geography were enough to guarantee entry to Britain's officer class. If the Army were ever ordered to capture paintings of fairly unimpressive landscapes, we all know who's best qualified to lead the charge.

What was most offensive about that headline 'The Royals are no

eggheads' was the way it crudely disparaged those who have attained some measure of academic achievement. This inverse snobbery wasn't just anti-intellectual by definition but anti-social by implication. It was reminiscent of the old school bully's 'let's-beat-up-the-swot' mentality, which insinuates, oh so snidely, that intelligence and diligent application warrant mockery at best – and, at worst, a damn good kicking round the back of the maths huts. History is replete with regimes in which intellectuals were the first ones up against the wall.

There's nothing egg-headed about academic achievement in early twenty-first century Britain. Most of it is the product of sheer hard graft. The majority of people in Britain are not born to huge, untold, unearned wealth. Yet this country has, for much of its history, been run by governing elites (not just the monarchy) whose solution to our social ills has frequently been: 'more carrot for me, more stick for you'.

This ultra-Establishment mentality is quick to rage against a 50p rise in unemployment benefit, but would clap a man in irons for criticising increments to the Civil List; the same mentality sneeringly belittles intellectual endeavour but rushes eagerly to the defence of the hyper-privileged. The carrot-and-stick society has extolled meritocracy in theory yet enshrined mediocrity in actuality, so what we have is 'mediocracy' – government by the mediocre. ■

This is the second part of a full length article - being serialised in *Imagine* - which was originally published in *The Drouth* magazine.



## PROFILE

Emily Robinson

### ■ Why should Britain become a republic?

The hereditary principle is indefensible in the modern world and it is absurd to continue with it. The British have a long and proud tradition of fighting for democracy including abolishing the monarchy back in 1649. It is about time we were rewarded with full sovereignty over our political system.

### ■ How would the British people benefit?

The process of drawing up a

republican constitution would give the British people the chance to debate the sort of political system they would like to have. Going through this process as a nation might renew public interest and confidence in the democratic process.

### ■ What would a British Republic tell the world?

It would show that we are not complacent about our democracy and that we are still striving to bring government closer to the people.

### ■ What experiences have influenced your support for Republic?

When I visit countries which are republics, I find that their national symbols and ceremonies celebrate the political struggles of their citizens. I would love it if ours could do the same. ■

Emily lives with her partner in London. She works for the Unlock Democracy campaign and is on Republic's Board.

# THE REAL COST OF THE MONARCHY



## ■ DEREK WHITE

In the great golf bag of irons and woods to beat the monarchy with, the most used is the cost club. The recurrent theme is the obscene luxury in which a privileged few live while the rest of the nation struggles to make ends meet. The players who use the cost club allude to the number of homes this dysfunctional family enjoy, the trains, boats and planes, the security, the flunkies and an endless list of extravagances beyond our wildest dreams. The Palace spokespeople, well schooled in *reductio ad absurdum* retort that the monarchy only costs us tuppence a day or some other ludicrously small sum, all geared to make us feel a little ashamed of ourselves for being so petty.

I have never used cost in any of my analyses of the benefits and disbenefits of the monarchy. It is a secondary issue. Further, if some aspect of British life is expensive but is truly beneficial to the people, then to hell with the expense; we must keep it. Take for example the National

Health Service; almost daily we are warned that free medical treatment from a consultation with a GP to extensive surgical care, can no longer be sustained without charging us. Yet successive governments have shied away from such a notion. None of us is without a friend or relative who has not needed complicated and massively expensive care. Sure, there are excesses, there is maladministration and there is waste within the NHS but the service is so fundamentally good, we must keep it at all costs. Nit-picking about how much it costs per head per annum does not arise. Even Margaret Thatcher, the milk snatcher, went so far as to assure the British people, the health service is safe with us.

As a slight digression, anyone wishing to argue cost in a monarchical context should look elsewhere. The NHS is quite literally vital. Look to the Holy Loch where, like gigantic black slugs, nuclear submarines, costing £1.7 billion each lie tied-up together. The maintenance of these boats alone costs a further £1.6 billion per annum. Yet their function is literally useless. We are committed on a "no first strike" policy. If examined this concept is

intellectually vacuous. No first strike means we would only respond to a nuclear strike from an enemy. So, as we all go in one incandescent glow (to use Tom Lehrer's famous line) we have the great comfort of knowing that some other unfortunate nation is about to be incinerated as well. Logic of the madhouse.

No, to fault the monarchy on cost is futile. Like the NHS if it was of any benefit to us we must, of course, keep it. But it is on much more important criteria that the monarchy can be seen as a destructive force within the UK. Many of us learned the monarchist litany when young. It was good for tourism, good for exports, better than those nasty foreign republics, a symbol of national unity and more. All of these arguments have been exposed as the nonsense they are. Most of our tourists come here because of the English-speaking alliance or because of our history or because of our very quaintness. More tourists visit Versailles Palace than Buck House simply because they can gain access. Proportionately more tourists travel to the Republic of Ireland than to Monarchical Britain. The export argument is now laughable. It may have had some clout in the days when every ship was Clyde built, every knife and fork came from Sheffield and a foreign car on

## A Message from the Chair



John  
Campbell

I was pleased and honoured to be re-elected Executive Chair at the most recent meeting of the Board of Directors. Republic has gone through many changes and is

looking to meet many challenges. As Chair I want to be able to ensure that we have in place the structures and team that will make this campaign a growing success.

Republic has come a long way since being founded 23 years ago by a small group of like-minded individuals, notably Albert Standley. At that time, with the Treason Felony Act of 1848 still in place, it was, on paper at least, illegal to even consider anything other than a monarch as head of state. This legislation has since been by-passed by the Human

Rights Act 1998.

Expansion of the membership base in recent years, some generous donations and a substantial legacy eighteen months ago have enabled Republic to grow in stature and to employ a full-time Campaign Manager, Graham Smith, and a part time assistant, William Summers.

Relying on this and other legacies, current membership subscriptions and donations will not guarantee long term success. Without future increases in money coming into the organisation, our current expenditure is not sustainable in the long term and so, over the coming two years, we must explore other sources of funds.

Some may question the level of expenditure we have currently committed to. But I believe that the money must be invested now to prepare for the future. Feedback from members, and others, confirms

that the improvements to the organisation and the campaign are appreciated. I am also aware that we have appeared over the horizon of the establishment as an organisation to watch. In addition, we will never forgive ourselves if we don't sustain and broaden our campaigning activity now. Why? Because, although anytime is a good time to campaign, we are approaching the cusp of a significant opportunity for Republic as the monarch hands over duties to her eldest boy.

We are already in discussions with individuals and organisations that could allow us to maintain our current level of activity. In the meantime we shall keep campaigning as much as possible. As I said at the recent Annual Conference, we shall 'be like a postage stamp' and stick to it until we get where we are going. ■

*Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily the view or policy of Republic, its staff or its Board of Directors.*



British roads was stared at. If there is a link between the monarchy and exports, it would be prudent not to allow the royals abroad.

The nasty foreign republics argument usually included a reference to some ghastly despot from overseas and never drew any parallels with our own history of royal murderers, despots, adulterers, lunatics and Nazi admirers.

However it is the symbol of national unity that is the most dishonest and offensive. The very concept of a hereditary head of state sows the seeds of social division. Before the Blair reforms there were 1192 peers in the House of Lords. Two-thirds of them were there purely through an accident of birth. Virtually all were of one sex and one religion. The monarch is the Head of the Church of England and only her bishops (all 26 of them) have an automatic right to a seat in the Upper House. What of all the heads of the Free Churches, the Eastern religions or the Roman Catholic Bishops - sorry not entitled. Under the Act of Settlement, the monarch and all family members are forbidden from marrying a Catholic under pain of exclusion from the royal pecking order.

Under the rule of primogeniture, males are given claim to hereditary titles, irrespective of elder sisters. So

our monarchical structure practises religious discrimination, is racist – worse, nepotistic, sexist and ageist.

Even after the Blair reforms, he retained a massive 92 hereditary peers. Why 92? Why any? Take the US Senate. They manage to get by with a total of 100 Senators - 2 per State. This tiny island seems to need roughly 600 - not one of whom is elected by the people.

Our symbol of national unity likes to use the phrase my people. A farcical term. Who are the Queen's people? The image is there for all to see - the elite in morning dress and top hats at Ascot, the braying voiced vacuous females who have spent more on a hat than a Jobseeker is paid in half a year. Or the clones who attend the Horse Trials at Badminton or perhaps the Barbour-jacketed in-crowd who follow the Polo at Windsor Park. These are her people. The gentle but naive Princess Diana once said she wanted her boys to attend a normal school (as opposed to Gordonstoun). She sent them to Eton. Within the Palace itself one is hard pressed to see a black or Asian face. The Horse Guards and other shiny soldiers who attend the royals are uniformly white. The equerries and senior flunkies including the Ladies of the Bedchamber are all members of one aristocratic family or another. Ladies

who are only common life peers are not recruited. Her people all use the rarefied and dying accent of a bygone age and would faint if someone said serviette, toilet, or dessert. Occasionally we glimpse a rare photograph of the Queen taking tea in a council house with Mrs McNumpy and the propagandists ask us to stretch our imaginations to breaking point that the excruciating discomfort felt by both women is an expression of our wonderful democracy.

As long as these dreadful divisions exist; as long as each year we continue to distribute some 2,000 ludicrous gongs relating to a long defunct Empire; as long as we have this appalling hierarchical structure of Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Barons, Knights, OBEs etc ad nauseam; as long as we are expected to curtsy, walk backwards and touch our forelocks to non-entities whose only claim to fame is being born - until this Ruritanian nonsense is swept aside, don't even consider the cost - you'll only make yourself more angry. ■

Derrick White is a writer, NUJ member, psychometrician, business trainer and a parliamentary candidate for both Westminster and Holyrood. He represented the SNP and latterly the SSP.

# THE NEW BOARD

There has been a lot of change in Republic's executive over the past twelve months, particularly since the election of five new Directors at the recent Annual General Meeting.

The Board of Directors now has fifteen members, which are listed below, seven of whom have joined since the beginning of the year. At their meeting in November the Board re-elected John Campbell as Executive Chair and elected Charles Brooker as Vice Chair. John Atkins continues as Treasurer.

The new Board represents a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and political affiliations. We now have active supporters of all three main political parties on the Board.

Directors have also completed a review of Committees and have introduced a new structure to help make decision making more effective.

Board meetings remain open to all

Republic members, so if you would like to attend a meeting please call us on 08708 508 825 or email [g.smith@republic.org.uk](mailto:g.smith@republic.org.uk)

## Directors of Republic

John Campbell - *Executive Chair*  
 Charles Brooker - *Vice-Chair*  
 John Atkins - *Treasurer*  
 Suzanne Campbell  
 Dane Clouston  
 Joe Coten  
 Alan Crowe  
 Emma Dent Coad (right)  
 Peter Hartley (top)  
 Stephen Haseler  
 Arthur Haynes  
 Cyril Meadows  
 Scott Reeve  
 Emily Robinson  
 John Tarrington (left)



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